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HOOPER WARREN.

HOOPER WARREN.

By Frank E. Stevens.

From Alexander P. Field to Hooper Warren! What a contrast! Field, powerful in physique; Warren slender and delicate. Field the convivial, indulgent man of the world; Warren, the abstemious and once at Galena, the almost starving man; the man too, who upon a bed of sickness was told that a drink of brandy would restore him to health, spurned it and declared he would rather die than touch it. There let the tremendous contrasts which stood between them, rest. Both were fearless. Both were tireless workers in any field or undertaking which engaged them. Each occupied a large place in the early history of this state. The only man to fight slavery with the passion with which Field advocated it, was his modest, almost diffident adversary, Hooper Warren, the real father of journalism in Illinois.

Warren was born in Walpole, New Hampshire, in May, 1790, and was one of a family of sixteen children. A grandson, Hooper W. Warren writes that Hooper Warren was a descendant of a Mayflower passenger of the name of Warren and that he was sure Hooper Warren was the son of a revolutionary soldier, but that is as definite as I have been able to trace his ancestry after a correspondence of several years. Judge D. J. Carnes of Sycamore, a grand-nephew has furnished me with more information about that ancestry than I have been able to secure from any other source.

At an early age, Warren's father and his uncle Seth with their families removed to Woodstock, Vermont, where Hooper Warren learned the printer's trade on the Herald—the Rutland Herald as some have called it—the

same paper that Horace Greeley learned his trade on and Warren himself is authority for the statement that Greeley and he learned their trade together on the same paper.

The minister who preached his funeral sermon declared that Warren while at Woodstock, made the acquaintance of two ministers of the Christian church and printed the first hymn book of that denomination.

In the year 1810, most of Warren's brother's and sisters moved over into the Black River country in New York State. The spirit of migration seemed to permeate the whole country at that time; it caught Warren himself, but he preferred the west as his ultimate destiny.

In 1814, he moved over into Delaware where he worked for about three years. After that and during the year 1817, he pushed on down to Frankfort, Ky., where he worked on a Frankfort paper until the year 1818¹. There the slavery sentiment was too strong for Warren and in 1818 he moved over to St. Louis where he went into the office of the Missouri Gazette.

Being a rabid anti-slavery man, he desired to enter the field of journalism in the proposed new state of Illinois so that he might fight any attempts that might be made to foist slavery onto the Illinois people. Something however must have altered his plans temporarily because we find him during the same year, as a lumberman's agent leaving St. Louis to go down the river to Cairo, there to establish a business. All that existed at that time to give the place the dignity of a name, was a stranded flat boat in which a very poor family was living. With this family he boarded until after finding it impossible to earn the prime necessities of life at any calling in Cairo, he turned northward again and under the tutelage of Governor Edwards, he established the Spectator on March 23, 1819, at Edwardsville.

Under date of a letter written February 19, 1860, Mr. Warren briefly states the preliminaries which antedated

¹ In Frankfort, Warren worked with Amos Kendall, subsequently Postmaster General.

his removal to Edwardsville: "I will here mention my first knowledge of Mr. Churchill. Having spent the fall and winter of 1818-19 at Cairo and other places near the mouth of the Ohio, I went to St. Louis in March of the latter year to have my prospectus printed for a paper in Edwardsville. On entering the office of Mr. Charless, the old man introduced me to a man at the case by the name of Churchill. Afterward, taking me to the counting room, he told me if I wanted assistance, I could not do better than to employ Mr. C. who had purchased land near Edwardsville, and was preparing to make a farm; that he was not only a good printer, but a first rate editor. He could hardly find words to express his admiration of the ability of Mr. Churchill in the latter capacity. At last he said "he was equal to Duane" which was as much in significance as it would be at the present day to say, "he is equal to Greeley."

I at once secured the services of Mr. Churchill, who continued with me a year and then went to the farm * *."

At that time the only papers published in Illinois were the Illinois Intelligencer founded by Mathew Duncan at Kaskaskia, the first issue of which under the name of the Illinois Herald, appeared September 6, 1814. The other had been founded as the Shawnee Chief, September 5, 1818, soon after, when Singleton H. Kimmel was taken as partner, its name was changed to the Illinois Emigrant.

In the early days of Illinois journalism, the editors were supposed to be mouthpieces of certain politicians. In the case of this third Illinois newspaper, the Spectator, Governor Ninian Edwards bought the equipment and constituted Warren its editor. The fact was so well known that on July 29, 1820, John McLean in the Illinois Gazette called Ninian Edwards, "the actual editor of the Edwardsville Spectator." Yet Warren would sacrifice no opinion to any mortal, and he was devotedly attached to Edwards at that. He was the most unrelenting foe to slavery extension that ever lived in Illinois. Edwards

always had been a pro-slavery man while living in Kentucky and favored the institution in 1819. Yet he opposed its introduction in Illinois. Thus it may be seen that he and Warren might get along together on that important question, without any friction. This explanation is made to show the untruthfulness of McLean's other statement that "the yoke of obligation was burdensome."

This Edwardsville Spectator was a five column folio. About one-half its space was occupied by home and foreign advertisements, many of them very quaint. For instance: one of them, a drug store ad, states that a line of "elegant medicines" are carried; among them being, "castor oil which is a real pleasure to take."

In the absence of a campaign, the papers were barren and dry, much of their space being devoted to essays of no interest to any person but the writer. But later Judge Joseph Gillespie has told us, that with respect to the Spectator, "as news became the dominant idea of the newspapers, the heavy leaders were dropped, and paragraphing became popular."

During its lifetime, the Spectator appeared to enjoy prosperity. A coterie of the strongest men in Illinois contributed to its columns and very soon it had become the strongest paper west of the Allegheny mountains. It became so formidable an engine against slavery that to offset its influence, State Senator Theophilus W. Smith, a violent pro-slavery man, with others, established in Edwardsville the Illinois Republican, in April, 1823. The ferocious battle for and against Field's Convention resolution was at its height. Smith directed his assaults directly at Warren; but the latter came back at Smith with such vigor and at the same time with such persuasive power that Smith lost his patience and later he lost his battle. Smith was a man of powerful physique, over six feet tall, broad shouldered, pugnacious; an all around bully in appearance and in fact. Warren, taciturn, gentle, kind, courteous, slender—almost delicate. When there-

fore Smith met Warren on the streets and pursuant to a very noisy boast, he proceeded to cowhide Warren, he met with such sturdy resistance that he pulled a dirk and attempted to dispatch the anti-slavery nuisance at a blow. But here again, Senator Smith over-reached. Warren drew a pistol and Smith's very long legs could not carry him fast enough down the street. That incident carried a considerable weight against Smith and his cause as well as his paper, the last named suspending on the Saturday previous to the election of the first Monday in August, 1824. In the words of Judge Gillespie, "no two papers ever fought at such close quarters or with such direct personal animosity and bitterness as those two at Edwardsville."

Between the pamphleteer, Morris Birkbeck over in the Shawneetown paper at the extreme east, and Hooper Warren in the columns of the Spectator at the extreme west, every subterfuge and every man who used subterfuge to bring slavery in Illinois, were attacked and annihilated and at the election, the anti-slavery people were successful.

There were few neutrals. Henry Eddy of Shawneetown tried very hard to remain so, but once in a while words and items appeared which might be construed to the contrary. They never escaped the eye of Warren who invariably retorted so savagely that considerable time elapsed before Warren had occasion to direct his batteries toward Shawneetown, again.

I have stated that a coterie of men surrounded Warren and used his columns with telling effect. They were Governor Edward Coles, Congressman Daniel P. Cook, Judge Samuel D. Lockwood, Rev. Thomas Lippincott, Judge William H. Brown and George Churchill.

During this period of Warren's life, which was the most memorable, great personal bravery was required to act as Warren acted and in that respect it is important to notice that,—especially after the Smith incident, nobody

dared pursue him as Governor Coles was pursued and hounded, by civil and criminal prosecutions, hanging in effigy and burning of his property. E. A. Snively very justly has said of him: "He was one of the great men of his day. His bravery was a twin brother with his ability."

Warren's bravery should not be extended to include pugnacity because he insisted on being permitted to express his principles. The slavery people expressed themselves in no uncertain manner and that was all Warren desired for himself. He felt so strongly on the point that he showed a willingness to fight with fists, or anything else to sustain his rights.

Shortly after engaging in his newspaper work, a man named Watkins challenged some of Warren's opinions and a free fight followed between the two. He defended himself in that scrimmage just as he did when Smith attempted to cowhide him and he came off handsomely. Watkins was arrested; but because Edward Coles signed his bond, Warren opposed him for governor notwithstanding the fact that Coles was the only anti-slavery candidate in the field. His grievance must have faded though because Coles afterwards contributed considerable to the Spectator during the vicious campaign of 1823-4.

There were employed no superfluous words in Hooper Warren's famous Spectator. He printed as he talked, briefly and to the point and in language which attracted though it stung when directed at what he regarded a wrong or an abuse.

A very peculiar feature of the man's manner of working, especially during that exciting campaign was this: He rarely wrote his copy. Standing at the case, he always set up his thoughts as they crowded themselves forward and it is said of him that still more rarely did it become necessary to correct his proof. He was very accurate.

A distinction has been drawn between Warren's Spectator and Lovejoy's Observer by stating that Warren

was an anti-slavery man while Lovejoy was an abolitionist. The distinction is drawn rather too minutely to be recognized, though it may be stated, that in 1823, abolitionists and abolition societies had not reached the prairies of Illinois, the opponents of slavery directing their energies against slavery extension rather than against its existence.

Just why Warren should sever his connection with the *Spectator* especially while it enjoyed an apparent prosperity is not known. At the end of the Convention fight it had eclipsed the St. Louis papers in point of reputation. It may be he thought he could carry that reputation to a larger place and enhance it. But so it was in November, 1825, Hooper Warren severed his connection with the *Spectator*, turning it over to Rev. Thomas Lippincott and Jeremiah Abbott, and went to Cincinnati where he associated himself with the *National Crisis*, an anti-slavery paper. The change proved a disappointment however. He remained there less than a year when he returned to Edwardsville and re-entered into possession of the *Spectator*. On October 20, 1826, the last number of the *Spectator* was issued and the plant was removed to Springfield immediately thereafter, when the *Sangamo Spectator* was established; Springfield's first paper.

At that time Springfield was a land office town of some 600 population, boomed systematically and Edwards the owner and Warren may have expected a great deal of patronage, especially land office advertising,—as well as speculative ventures in land and also the creation in a new and growing country of some Edwards sentiment. The project promised much, but it flattened itself into miserable failure. 170 subscribers were as many as the paper could muster, notwithstanding the great size of Sangamon county and its respectability of numbers. Its first number appeared February 21, 1827. It struggled along a losing and impossible venture under Warren until fall, during most of which time he was trying to sell it.

At that time the lead mines country had great reputation for wealth and possibilities in every line of endeavor. People were flocking there in great numbers and Warren desired to go too, but his notions of duty were so nice that he refused to leave until a reasonable prospect of securing to Governor Edwards a return of his investment could be assured. At last one Samuel C. Meredith appeared and bought the property for \$1,000, and changed the paper's name to the Journal and Sangamo Gazette, February 16, 1829. Warren realized very soon thereafter that Meredith was so poor a manager that he never could succeed. Indeed before he closed the deal he believed him to be unfamiliar with the business and so wrote Gov. Edwards; but he honestly believed it was the only way out of a very bad mess. His 170 subscribers he declared he could not keep for renewals. Money was wretchedly scarce and in '28, he wrote to Edwards what to him was his greatest hardship to endure: "Newspapers at present have but little influence. The readers are but few, and these are taught to believe that all that appears in a newspaper is a lie of course."

Meredith went from bad to worse. He would order paper and forget his ink. Ink would come and he would be out of paper. Help was scarce and he was too indifferent to push the work himself and so a couple or more weeks would elapse between issues; sometimes more time would elapse.

Warren remained in Springfield looking for a location. During February and March, 1829, he had under consideration a proposal to go to Galena to engage in the newspaper business with Dr. Horatio Newhall and Dr. Addison Philleo, not from personal choice but because Gov. Edwards and other friends over the state proposed it. A possible partnership with Mr. Jones the then only printer at Galena was considered. He states that at first the proposal was repugnant but after a little reasoning, he fell in with the advice and through Dr. Newhall nego-

tiations with Jones were opened. But Jones declined a partnership.

On March 7, 1829, he wrote Governor Edwards that he had been helping Meredith; that two issues of the paper had been issued and a third was soon to appear and then, having no paper and with no arrangements for more. In this letter, Warren states to the governor that if the latter thought best, he would propose to Meredith to cancel the bargain and remove the plant to Galena.

At that time too, Warren manifests the ruling mania for office. He asks Edwards to intercede with President Jackson for an appointment. He also endeavors to make a date with Judge Young for the purpose of asking an appointment as clerk in one of the new counties to be organized in Judge Young's district.

Warren's stand with respect to the Springfield paper seems peculiar. On March 28, 1828, he wrote to Gov. Edwards that its location is improving, yet he follows the statement with the further one that of the 170 subscribers, "and when the year is up, it is probable that one-third or more will withdraw." For some reason or another he was very anxious to get away from Springfield. He had secured the publication of the United States laws and admits that when he shall receive the moneys for that service, he will have "enough to live on till that time."

He wanted to go out on the road as we would say now for Gatton and Enos to sell goods. He admits that he was not especially fitted for the work, "but I thought I might make a comfortable living by it."

It would seem that he desired to hide the ownership of Governor Edwards, and he suggests a form of advertisement to cover the case. He also states that \$750 should be a fair price for it, yet establishment well located "should command a premium of 50 or 100 per cent." The form of his advertisement was also to state that Springfield was removed from any other printing establishment and without probability of any rival establishment. One won-

ders at what seems like instability when in the middle of his letter he says that "there is nothing that can sustain the paper but new type and its enlargement. This I am unable to do, nor would I be willing to accept the assistance of my friends to do it. I think you have gone as far in patronizing the press for public purposes as any man ought to do, without being better seconded by his friends, and I would advise you to make the most of this without regard to them."

On April first, 1828, he writes again to Edwards, "I am heartily tired of struggling for a subsistence in a laborious, unprofitable and thankless business." And yet he plunged into a very much more distressing time of it at Galena.

May 26 seems to be the first letter he writes from Galena. In that letter he intimates that he took back the plant from Meredith and shipped it to Galena because he says. "Those (materials) I sent to Beaird's Ferry on the Illinois river." Subsequent correspondence confirms such transfer. Warren's introduction to Galena upset all the brilliant visions he may have had about the riches of the lead mines. He told Edwards that he arrived in the place on the 17th instant by stage with his family. Further, "I find business here almost in the lowest state of depression."

The keg of ink he had purchased at St. Louis, did not arrive with the rest of the materials so that Dr. Philleo took the first returning boat down the river to look for it.

At this time too, Warren expresses to the governor the right to dictate the political policy of the paper and insofar as the political principles conflicted with his own he proposed in private to disown them. Therefore he suggested that Philleo be made the political manager of the political conscience. 230 subscribers were found for the paper before its first issue.

On August 16th, Warren finds himself hedged about with all manner of difficulties, the greatest of which was

ill health. He refers to the generous treatment of Edwards and he admits the ownership of Edwards in the paper, the Gazette and Upper Mississippi Herald. Warren does not like the drift of matters political. Help was scarce. He was compelled to do all the work himself. He had been compelled to ask credit for part of his passage money to that point. He had boarded with a very poor family who had not received a cent. He importuned his two doctor partners for money but they had none. His wife had been sick nearly all the time she resided there. Though almost out of courage, he finds no fault with Governor Edwards. Said he, "I would rather express it, that you have never wished to take advantage of my dependence."

The printing business must have been in a very low state indeed. His rival, Jones was in a very much worse condition. He had no paper, nor ink for two weeks, but what Warren loaned him, and he had no money to buy more.

He complains that while he had been doing all the work, the paper must come out one day late for the mail. Journeymen printers commanded ten dollars per week, but they were scarce. It should excite no surprise to notice his appeals to be given a clerkship under Judge Young.

By December first the subscription list had grown to 400, but scarcely any jobs came in and but little advertisements were offered him. "I am in purgatory now, and since I have been here."

On December 8th he told the governor he had bought 32 reams of paper on a credit of sixty days, of Tillson and Holmes, which would indicate that with all his trying penury, the newspaper man had credit. On December 16, he and Dr. Philleo had had some controversy about supporting a certain candidate whose principles did not appeal favorably to Warren. He quotes Philleo's remark:

“Where principle was the same, one was at liberty to go for interest.”

Warren taught his two partners to set type in order to help out, but they no sooner learned to do it than they declined and so poor Warren had to assume all the responsibilities and the work while the doctors received the few straggling dollars which were earned. In a state of mental and physical collapse, Warren at last employed a certain discharged soldier who floated down from Fort Snelling. Philleo boarded him as an off-set to any little inconveniences arising to Warren like starvation. The soldier worked famously for a day or so, after which, as Warren said, he continued in a besotted condition.

The poor man worked on and on until at last he and his wife and his children were all stricken with fever and ague. For a day he crawled out of bed to help the other members of his family. Very presently, he found himself in a starving condition. On February 20, 1830, he wrote Edwards, “Thank God, the winter is over and I hope it is the last I shall ever spend in Galena unless I am better prepared. Since the commencement of cold weather there has been nothing here but balls, parties, gambling and frolicking.” And poor Warren starving to death!

At about that time he rented a cottage for which he agreed to pay \$4.00 per month, but he expected to be turned out of it pretty soon because he had paid no rent and his wife had become reduced to a skeleton by sickness and starvation.

During those moments of anguish, his correspondence shows a remarkably temperate tone. He appeals for the appointment of a clerkship, yet he does not whine. It is done in a manly spirit of determination to brave his afflictions to the end.

At this period it is interesting to note how he regarded Chicago. Said he, speaking of Chicago and the hope that a special session of the legislature may organize the county at Chicago. “I have the best opinion of that place. It

does not in my view want a canal to make it." As great things were predicted from influence of the canal, he seems to have penetrated the future of the great city with a precision little less than prescience. It needed "only to put the land into market and it will settle with greater rapidity than any other town in the state." and then: "Between Warren county and Chicago, would prefer Chicago because I feel confident that it will be the principal commercial port in our state."

For a long time his cow had been the main sustenance of the family. But one day the cow died and the fortunes of Hooper Warren reached their lowest ebb. How many men could stand up under his misfortunes? And he such a slender, delicate man! He was courageous physically. He was willing to undertake any task, but with starvation staring him in the face, he might be said to be sinking fast. At the last moment relief came in the form of an appointment from Judge Young to the office of clerk of the circuit court for Putnam county and in the year 1831 he removed to Hennepin to take up the duties of his office.

From 1831 to 1836 he was circuit clerk. From 1831 to 1835 he was recorder of deeds. From 1831 to 1834 he was county clerk, holding all those offices at the same time as well as the office of Justice of the Peace.

He clung so tenaciously to his official duties that his name is scarcely found in the annals of Putnam's history. But he lived at Hennepin until the year 1839 when he moved to Henry Prairie and in the year 1841 he moved to the site of Henry.

The fees of his offices were small, but with his economies, he was enabled to purchase a piece of land, the one upon which he moved. With those little offices his tenure of office ended.

Like the martyrs, Warren was immoveable. Once his mind was made up, it remained. The story of the brandy was not a myth. Though he never belonged to a temperance society, he had that abhorrence of liquor that he

would prefer death to liquor. His habits too became so fixed that he could not have changed them had he tried. The story is told by Judge D. J. Carnes of Sycamore, a grand nephew, that upon one occasion when Warren had gone back to Vermont to visit the father of Judge Carnes, he desired to get shaved. There were razors to be had in the house; but Warren never had learned to shave himself and he had been shaved regularly so that Mr. Carnes had to hitch up the team and climb the hills which intervened to get the man to the barber's chair. It was not remarkable therefore that many classed him as a crank. He may have tended that way, but he was made of the stuff which is needed in times just like those of '61 and '65. When Warren accepted the appointment to go to Hennepin, he settled down upon a piece of land. He had been offered a subscription of 750 cash subscriptions to return to Springfield, but his experiences had been so bitter that as he said many times, he did not care to try a newspaper business again.

After his removal to Henry, he was drawn into several newspaper enterprises, but not so deeply as to interfere with his fixed determination never again to be drawn away from the soil very far. His Galena Gazette suspended with the issue of June 30, 1830. December 19, 1840, the LaSalle county anti-slavery society established The Genius of Liberty at Lowell. Zebina Eastman and Hooper Warren had charge of it until April, 1842. Three months later it resumed in Chicago as the Western Citizen. In 1851 he edited the Princeton Post for a short while. In 1852-3 he acted as the editor of the Western Citizen in conjunction with Zebina Eastman at Chicago. The paper was an anti-slavery and a temperance paper. In 1857, he went over to the same Lowell in LaSalle county and for a short while acted with Benjamin Lundy and Zebina Eastman on the Commercial Advertiser.

Warren was a singularly quiet man. He was taciturn to the last degree. His conversation was almost wholly in

monosyllables. He never tried to speak in public. He was a first class listener but after listening attentively and forming his judgment it was not to be changed. He was a tender hearted man. It distressed him to learn of others in pain; yet no man among the well known men of Illinois suffered anything like the pain Hooper Warren suffered. In his day, money was so scarce that most of his and other subscriptions were paid in commodities. The Illinois Gazette announced a scale of prices and a list of acceptable goods. The publishers announced that they would receive in payment of subscriptions: clean linen and cotton rags, and in payment of subscriptions and advertisements, bacon, tallow, beeswax, feathers, hides, deer-skins and pork.

Printing of the United States laws was one of the chief items of support in those days. Next, the contributions made by aspiring politicians formed a conspicuous part of the printer's income. The list of 400 which he had in Galena was considered by others down the state to be a good living list. Official county notices and proceedings of boards afforded a substantial part of the income. But add them all together, the printer who had no other employment fared very poorly. In most instances of early Illinois history, the publishers had other lines of employment, like with Henry Eddy the newspaper was made to serve a personal ambition rather than a source of income.

In 1857 we find that Warren was a member of the Chicago Historical Society.

In 1812, Hooper Warren married Mary Adamson. His mother's name was Hooper. His influence for good was great and during the Civil War he worked incessantly in many ways to further the Federal cause. In 1864 while on a visit to Chicago to see about some important arrangements connected with sending supplies southward he was taken ill. At once he started for his home to which he had retired in 1856. At Mendota, he stopped off to see his

son-in-law, Edwin Littlefield who lived there, and in a few days he died¹ and his body was removed to Henry where it was buried beside his wife who had preceded him in 1850.

By keeping his Henry land, he died worth a considerable property.

He left surviving him four children, Matilda, who married a Mr. Clarkson; Mary Emma, who married Mr. Edwin Littlefield; John Adamson Warren and Winslow Seth Warren.

As a writer, Warren had a style, which was simple, direct, courteous, chaste, accurate and effective. He employed words easily understood. His sentences were short. Isabel Jamison has said that he was a writer of marked ability.

The last years of his life were spent to a considerable extent in correcting the historical errors made by Reynolds, Ford and other writers. Some of those letters I have before me and in giving some of my dates which conflict with history, I have taken them from his corrections.

Warren was a religious man though not moved by sudden impulse. His people were members of the Christian church and so was he a member.

This effort to secure data and put in form a suitable sketch of a truly grand man's life, has proved distressingly unsatisfactory. My principal authority did not know his grandmother's maiden name. Judge Carnes supplied that. Not a person nor a book could give any information of Warren's school life. To get a reply to every one of my letters required at least six months of "follow up" pounding. At the last minute I found the name of a relative in Louisville who was said to have accurate knowledge of the Warren ancestry. No address

¹ August 22, 1864.

was given. My letter to the general delivery was returned. At once I communicated the circumstance to my informant, but from past experience it will be next summer sometime before my inquiry will receive an answer. I am compelled therefore, to confess to keen disappointment in this story.